## 3. FEEDING OUR ALLIES

The task of Food Control was complicated by the fact that, as the principal shipping Power on the Allied side, we had to take thought, not *Responsibility for our Allies* only for ourselves, but also for our Allies. Food cargoes which we urgently needed for our own population we had from time to time to divert to meet the needs of France and Italy, and to save their Governments from having to face dangerous discontent. While this food-importing island not only maintained but increased its home-grown food supplies during the War, France, a food-producing country, much more thinly populated, had to call more and more insistently for outside help. Some of its most fertile provinces were in enemy hands, and as the range and intensity of bombardment lengthened the area of cultivation diminished. Moreover, as nearly half the French Army was drawn from the rural areas, the drain on the man-power of France was telling seriously on the productiveness of the soil.

Soon after America entered the War, Mr. Hoover, who had been in charge of the work of Belgian Food Controller in the U.S.A., had an inter-view with Lord Robert Cecil and handed a memorandum proposing that since all the Allies were seeking to buy

*Mr. Hoover's Memorandum: International Board propose*

food in the States, it would be desirable for them to set up an International Board to co-ordinate their demands, ascertain the available supplies, and allocate them among the Allied countries. He pointed out that " the general outlook from now on is that the available supplies and shipping will be a diminishing, rather